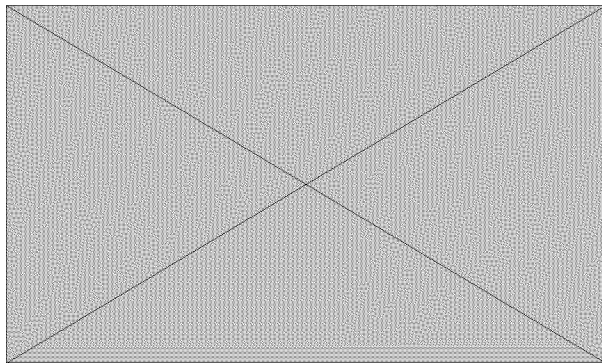


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**Sent:** Fri 1/15/2016 10:53:16 PM  
**Subject:** story

## DOH, DEC asks EPA to take action on Hoosick Falls water

By Casey Seiler, Capitol bureau chief on January 14, 2016 at 5:25 PM



Looking down on Carey Ave. the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics plant is seen in the background in Hoosick Falls. (Paul Buckowski / Times Union)

The state departments of Environmental Conservation and Health want the federal Environmental Protection Agency to add the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corp. plant and other possible sources of contamination in Hoosick Falls to the National Priorities List under the federal Superfund program, and investigate contamination sources.

As the TU's Brendan Lyons reported as part of a series of stories on the situation in Hoosick Falls, the EPA last month issued a statement warning residents not to drink or cook with village water because of elevated levels of a toxic chemical, perfluorooctanoic acid or "PFOA," that was used since the 1940s to manufacture industrial and household products such as non-stick coatings and heat-resistant wiring — including at a factory near the village water treatment plant.

The state Health Department only recently changed its stance on the safety of the village's water: In early December, DOH handed out a "fact sheet" to residents stating "health effects are not expected to occur from normal use of the water."

Researchers say a "probable link" exists between PFOA and a range of ailments in humans, including various types of cancer.

The release from the two state agencies came out less than two hours before EPA was scheduled to hold a town meeting with the community.

The full release from the state agencies, which oddly does not mention DOH's recent turnaround in its assessment of the water's safety:

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Department of Health (DOH) today called on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to add the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corporation McCaffrey Street Plant and other possible sources of contamination in Hoosick Falls to the National Priorities List (NPL) under the federal Superfund program and to undertake a full environmental investigation to address the sources of contamination. In addition, the state, Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corporation and the Village of Hoosick Falls (Village) are collaboratively working on an agreement to install water treatment systems to remove hazardous chemicals from the Village's water supply. To view the state's letters, click [here](#) and [here](#).

Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said, "As soon as the Department of Health was notified of the contamination, we immediately began working with all parties in a collaborative manner to gather more data on the problem and work on solutions to reduce people's exposure to PFOA. I look forward to working with DEC, EPA and the Village of Hoosick Falls to address the sources of contamination."

Acting DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said, "It is imperative that all levels of government work collaboratively to protect public health and the environment in situations such as this. DOH is working to develop a long-term solution for the Village's public water supply and we must ensure the extent of contamination is identified and cleaned up. I urge the EPA to take vigorous action on the federal level to regulate PFOA and quickly add this site to the National Priorities List so the resources of the federal Superfund program can be used to advance these next steps."

#### **State Calls for National Priorities Listing & Urges Federal Action on PFOA**

NPL listing permits EPA to use the resources of the federal Superfund to investigate and clean up hazardous substances. Listing also enables EPA to issue an order requiring a responsible party or parties to clean up the site if that becomes necessary. The source, or sources, of PFOA to the Village's public water system has not been confirmed. Through the federal Superfund program, all potential sources and responsible parties will be evaluated.

The state also called on the EPA to take stronger national actions to address Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) contamination. In a letter to EPA

Administrator Gina McCarthy, DEC and DOH requested that EPA lower its health advisory for PFOA in drinking water to take into account the most current scientific evidence and adopt a protective maximum contaminant level. This letter also called upon EPA to expeditiously list PFOA as a hazardous substance under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) to facilitate the cleanup of contaminated groundwater and other media. Further, the letter asks EPA to review the remaining uses of PFOA under the Toxic Substance Control Act and curtail them whenever less toxic alternatives are available.

#### **DOH Continues to Monitor Water to Ensure Public Health Safety**

PFOA was detected in the Village's public drinking water in 2014. Although the use of PFOA is being phased out, it is still used to make household and commercial products that resist heat, and repel oil, stains, grease, and water. This includes nonstick cookware, surface coatings for stain-resistant carpets and fabric, and paper and cardboard food packaging. Studies of people have associated exposure to PFOA with an increased risk for several health effects. This includes associations with effects on the liver, immune system, thyroid gland, cholesterol levels, blood pressure during pregnancy, and kidney and testicular cancer.

After PFOA was detected in the water supply, DOH worked closely with the Village to provide technical advice and assistance for water sampling and to evaluate water treatment options to eliminate health risks. Because the levels of PFOA in public water were higher than the EPA health advisory level, DOH determined that people should reduce their exposure by avoiding the use of tap water for drinking and cooking. In addition, DOH continues to monitor private wells and will have more results very soon.

#### **State Undertakes Cancer Registry & Biomonitoring Studies**

In response to public concern, DOH has also begun an investigation of the incidence of cancer among Village residents, using data from the DOH Cancer Registry. The agency will also offer a PFOA biomonitoring study for residents of the Hoosick Falls area. This study will measure PFOA in blood to provide information on exposure. Detailed information about the project will be shared with area residents prior to the start of the project.

DOH will continue to provide technical advice and assistance to the Village, to protect the health of the affected residents. The agency has been testing water samples since first notified of the contamination, and will continue to test private wells.